



Director of  
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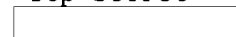
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## ISRAEL: Sharon To Stay in Cabinet

*Prime Minister Begin's cabinet yesterday approved former Defense Minister Sharon's transfer to the post of minister without portfolio.* [redacted]

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The cabinet was unable to decide on Sharon's replacement, and Begin will hold the portfolio until a decision is reached. According to press accounts, the cabinet also discussed new appointments for chief of staff and director of military intelligence. [redacted]

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Comment: Ambassador to the US Arens remains the leading contender to succeed Sharon, but his nomination apparently is being held up by concerns within the coalition that Begin's Herut Party--of which Sharon and Arens are members--will have too many cabinet posts. Arens also may be reluctant to serve in the defense post with Sharon looking over his shoulder. [redacted]

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Most Israelis appear satisfied with Begin's resolution of the problem, although there is some opposition to having Sharon remain in the cabinet. Begin is likely to face considerable questioning and possibly a no-confidence vote when the Knesset reconvenes today. [redacted]

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Sharon retains considerable influence despite the severe restrictions imposed by his ouster from the defense post. If he continues to serve on the important ministerial defense committee, he could wield considerable power over security matters and the Lebanon negotiations. [redacted]

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## CHINA-USSR: Further Bilateral Talks

*The Chinese have said they will raise the issue of SS-20s in the Far East during the second round of Sino-Soviet political talks scheduled to begin in Moscow on 1 March.* [redacted]

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Chinese party Chairman Hu Yaobang told an East European ambassador late last month the Chinese team will be headed by Vice Foreign Minister Qian Qichen, who represented China at the first round in Beijing last October. Hu stated there could be no normalization of relations with the USSR until the Soviet threat to China had been removed. He also said the Chinese now included any transfer of Soviet SS-20s to the Far East as part of the problem, claiming it threatens regional security. [redacted]

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Meanwhile, the annual Soviet-Chinese trade negotiations opened in Moscow last week with both parties expecting increased trade. The Chinese have told one East European diplomat they expected a 40-percent rise over 1982 and are hoping for even larger growth. [redacted]

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Chinese officials in Moscow, however, told the US Embassy trade increases depend primarily on the USSR's willingness to export more raw materials. The Soviets thus far have refused to do so because these materials are readily marketable in the West. [redacted]

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Comment: Raising the SS-20 question at the political talks almost certainly will reduce chances for an early breakthrough. The Chinese have privately expressed concern over the SS-20s for several months, but their decision to publicize their position for the first time probably is intended in part to lay the groundwork for raising the question directly with the Soviets. At the same time, the Chinese are anxious to demonstrate to Japan and other Asian nations that they are sympathetic to regional concerns about the problem. [redacted]

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A 40-percent increase in trade still would not raise it to levels that existed before 1981, the low point for economic exchanges. This trade accounts for less than 1 percent of either country's total trade and, on economic grounds alone, could be expanded greatly. [redacted]

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The major economic impediment to further growth in trade is the complexity of negotiating the amounts and composition of commodities to be traded under a barter agreement. An improved political climate might help to overcome this constraint. [redacted]

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## PORTUGAL-US: Base Negotiations

*A senior Foreign Ministry official recently told the US Embassy in Lisbon that talks on renewing the agreement for US use of Lajes Airbase in the Azores should continue despite the caretaker nature of the government.* [redacted]

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The official indicated that, while the Portuguese are prepared to discuss use of mainland facilities, they still prefer to separate these negotiations from the Lajes agreement. He said the new base agreement can cover expansion and modernization of facilities at Lajes, points that are contentious in the Portuguese military.

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Comment: The official's remarks refute earlier indications in the press that the base negotiations will be delayed until a new government is installed after the election in April. They imply the government expects no difficulty from the Socialists--who are almost certain to emerge from elections at the head of a new government--as long as they are kept informed on the negotiations.

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The willingness to discuss expanding the facilities at Lajes suggests civilian officials are satisfied with the US financial proposals. The military has consistently urged a hard line on compensation and has expressed dissatisfaction with the performance of civilian negotiators. Civilian decisionmakers will take account of those views, but military autonomy recently has been reduced, and the military will have little choice but to go along.

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## GUATEMALA: Abuses by Civil Patrols

*Lax discipline and poor leadership in the civil defense patrols reportedly are causing human rights abuses and have led to a violation of the Mexican border.* [redacted]

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Press reports state personal feuds between members of competing patrols have resulted in some 25 recent deaths. Guatemalan labor leaders also claim some members of a non-Communist peasant union were murdered by a civil defense force on orders from an Army officer. [redacted]

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Mexican officials believe a recent incursion involving civil defense patrol members was incited by a personal vendetta and was not directed by Guatemalan authorities.

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The civil defense forces patrol villages and provide intelligence on insurgent movements. They have been expanded in the last year to approximately 300,000 members, although no more than 10 percent of them are armed.

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Comment: Reports of abuses by the civilian patrols have been infrequent, but, given their poor training and leadership, more problems are likely. The government may be forced to slow the expansion of the program or increase its control over the civilian units if abuses increase. The civil defense forces play an important counterinsurgency role, however, and such moves would diminish government efforts. [redacted]

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The political activity of peasant unions and Indian organizations probably will increase next month after the state of siege is lifted. Many peasants, however, may not participate if intimidation and harassment continue. Guerrillas are posing an additional threat by infiltrating their units in an effort to provoke government repression. [redacted]

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## BARBADOS-CUBA: Closer Relations


Barbados and Cuba late last month signed their first cultural agreement after negotiations extending more than a year. The accord provides for Cuban scholarships and bilateral scientific and cultural exchanges. Barbados also has decided to seek membership in the Nonaligned Movement. Cuba has proposed cultural agreements with several Caribbean countries after a Politburo study a year ago concluded the most effective and cheapest way to penetrate neighboring countries is through increasing cultural contacts. 

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Comment: The agreement represents a shift from Bridgetown's position of last year, when it denounced Cuba's scholarship offers to a local leftist group. Barbados may have signed the agreement in order to gain more control over the scholarship awards to Barbadians. The plans by Barbados to join the Nonaligned Movement and increase contacts with Havana are intended primarily to help it to obtain the UN Security Council seat now held by Guyana. 

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